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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ADERHOLT).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 7, 2005.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ROBERT B. ADERHOLT to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) for 5 minutes.

FEDERAL SPENDING AND THE DEFICIT

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, as we all know this week, the House will consider very important legislation to reduce Federal spending, root out waste and fraud in government programs, and make a large dent in our Federal deficit. Along with cutting taxes and supporting job creation, making government more responsive is a critical part of our Republican agenda to keep our economy growing.

Mr. Speaker, the numbers are in. Our agenda is working for the American

people. Despite the destruction caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the economy grew at a 3.8 percent GDP level last quarter. Now, that is ahead of the second quarter and certainly ahead of projections that we had in the wake of those hurricanes. Over the past 12 months, nearly 2 million new jobs have been created.

Because of tax cuts and a strong economy, Federal revenue increased by almost 15 percent last year, and the deficit fell by nearly \$96 billion. Mr. Speaker, this happened not by raising taxes, but by cutting them and empowering America's entrepreneurs. In the face of such remarkable progress, we are not about to let up. We are moving forward with reforms that will save more than \$50 billion over the next 5 years. This will help us reduce the deficit even further and support rebuilding along the gulf coast.

I commend the hard work done by all the committees who found significant savings in mandatory programs without altering benefits to those who are truly in need. While I am hoping for bipartisan support of this legislation, I fear that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will stand in the way of restraint and reform. After all, my Democratic friends voted against our responsible budget. During the appropriations process, Mr. Speaker, they offered amendments that would have increased Federal spending by \$61 billion.

While they measure compassion through spending, we demand results through reform. Mr. Speaker, mandatory spending needs to be reformed. Each year, the government funds critical programs at increasingly higher levels. But we have seen that automatic spending breeds unaccountable spending.

Consider Medicaid. As medicine has made rapid advances over the past two decades, Medicaid has not been updated. The program costs more, delivers less, and, as we all know, is beset

with abuse. In 2002, the Department of Health and Human Services found that Medicaid was paying pharmacies \$1.5 billion more than the cost of those drugs they were dispensing. In one case, Medicaid paid over \$5,000 for a prescription that cost a pharmacy just \$88.

Our reforms will save billions by giving States more flexibility, eliminating fraud and ensuring the system only serves the needy. It is also important to note that Medicaid will continue to grow in the years ahead. Right now, it grows at a rate of 7.3 percent. Under our plan, it will grow at 7 percent.

We are also zeroing in on other programs, Mr. Speaker, that can benefit from reforms. The food stamp program nearly doubled to \$35 billion over the past 5 years. While funding will continue to grow, we are targeting savings of less than one-half of 1 percent. We will do this in part by extending the eligibility waiting period for noncitizens from 5 to 7 years.

Mr. Speaker, public benefits should not be a magnet for immigration. Over the past 5 years, Federal spending for child support administrative costs has increased by 29 percent while caseloads have declined by 8 percent. The Ways and Means Committee saves over \$3 billion by splitting administrative costs 50/50 with the States, the same match that they use for other entitlement programs.

Mr. Speaker, our savings proposals are common sense and responsible, and they represent a very good and important start. In the months ahead, we will continue to work for ways to cut the deficit, eliminate waste and reduce discretionary spending. Because as Republicans, we are committed to growing our economy, not Federal spending.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to what I know will be a lively debate on this issue as we bring our package for reform forward, and it will, I believe, when we implement this, help us in our

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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quest to keep the economy growing and to reduce the Federal deficit. It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that at the end of the day, we will be able to see bipartisan support for this very appealing, very attractive, very important package.

FEDERAL SPENDING AND THE DEFICIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I came over here this morning because I am very concerned about our country. I am concerned about it because we are in a financial morass around here. I don't think that the powers that be in this town are leveling with the American people about just how bad the budget deficit and the debt of our country has become and how rapidly it has deteriorated from the 1990s when we had, arguably, a surplus, and we were digging ourselves out of previous debt.

I do not mean this to be political, because we are all Americans first and Democrats and Republicans second, and this is our country's balance sheet, it is not the Republican balance sheet, it is not the Democratic balance sheet, it is all of our balance sheet, particularly our children. In the last 4 years, our country has borrowed over \$1.3 trillion. If that is not bad enough, it might interest you to know that 85 percent of that has come from foreign governments, foreigners, who are investing in the bills, notes and bonds of our country.

China now owns almost \$300 billion of our paper, and the Japanese own almost \$700 billion. In Asia alone, we owe almost \$1 trillion.

What does this mean to us? Well, it means that we are mortgaging our country to people who may not see the world as we see it. We are giving those countries leverage over us in the financial markets, so that we are potentially in danger of losing our economic freedom to people who own our debt and who can therefore dictate the value of the dollar and all the things that go with that.

That said, this is an American problem. This is not the Republican's balance sheet, it is not the Democrat's balance sheet, it is all of our balance sheets.

In 2004, to put this in some kind of a context, our government borrowed \$13,300 a second. Staggering. In the last 4 years, this administration and this Congress have borrowed more money from foreign interests than all 42 presidents in our history up to 2001. Can you imagine that? We have borrowed more money from foreigners in the last 4 years than all 42 presidents of this country up to 2001. We cannot continue to do what we are doing here without jeopardizing our economic freedom.

In a few minutes, you are going to hear from another Blue Dog, DENNIS CARDOZA, about our plan to try to stop this.

This whole budget process is broken. You are going to hear a lot of stuff this week about the reconciliation of the budget, and what they are going to say is we are cutting spending. But if you look at it, the reconciliation process will actually increase the deficit, not decrease it.

Until the leadership of this country, both here in Congress and the administration, levels with all of us and comes to the American people and says we have got a problem, and we have got to fix it and you have got to help, until they do that, it is just one Congressman saying A and another Congressman saying B, and people lose sight of what is going on here and think it is just another political argument.

Well, I am here this morning to tell you it is not a political argument. It is a dire necessity that we face up to the fact that we have a structural, continuing deficit. The President of the United States himself said we hope to cut the deficit in half in 5 years. That is like saying a doctor telling you I have got good news for you, I thought you were going to bleed to death in 6 months. It will take you 1½ years to bleed to death.

That is no solution to our problem. We have a structural deficit problem. We go in the red every year around here. We have got to completely, in my judgment and in the Blue Dog's judgment, take another look at the whole budget process and almost start from scratch, because I can tell you, folks, we are not doing any good the way we are going right now.

WHY ARE WE FIGHTING THE WAR ON TERROR?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, President Bush addressed a Virginia audience, vowing no letup in the war on terror. He acknowledged we have rocky roads ahead but we will not falter. The President said, "Tyrants and would-be tyrants have always claimed that murder is justified to serve their grand vision and they end up alienating decent people across the globe." And he said, "And tyrants and would-be tyrants have always claimed that free men and women are weak and decadent, until the day that free men and women defeat them."

Mr. Speaker, why did he say this? For what exactly are we fighting is the question. On Saturday, October 29, 2005, in India, explosions rocked two New Delhi markets, killing almost 60 people. Although Indian officials appeared hesitant to immediately place blame, Pakistan-based Islamic militants have been suspected in these bombings. Pos-

sibly, as some Indian analysts and newspapers have suggested, these are Pakistani-based groups fighting to wrest Kashmir from India.

Meanwhile, in Jakarta, Indonesia, that same day, seven assailants attacked a group of high school girls walking through a cocoa plantation on their way to class in Indonesia's tense province of Central Sulawesi, beheading three and seriously wounding a fourth. The girls were from a private Christian high school. Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim nation. But Central Sulawesi has a roughly equal number of Muslims and Christians, and sectarian violence. The province witnessed such a bloody war in 2001-2002 that killed around 1,000 people from both communities. At the time, beheadings, burnings and other atrocities were common.

Last week, a grateful Nation paid respects and laid to rest a woman who had the courage to practice her convictions, Rosa Parks. In great part, thanks to her understated fight for freedom, we can take for granted in this country our civil liberties. One of the most fundamental of these, of course, is the simple freedom to worship. However, the irony of our Nation being touched by such a peacefully resolute woman being an agent of change with nothing more than the word "no" the same weekend we witness these alternative, violent ways of objecting to our fellow man by these Islamic fundamentalist terrorist practices is not lost on me.

As did Rosa Parks, thousands of individuals today around the world want to practice their civil rights in the name of freedom of worship, perhaps in a faith not held by their nation's leaders. We want to practice Christianity, or Judaism, or Buddhism, or observe no religion at all, yet there are some people who just cannot stand this, who absolutely refuse to allow us this opportunity. The Web site www.persecution.org, a Web site that tracks human rights and persecution of people for choosing to simply practice their Christian faith, reported on October 6 that 53-year-old Pamilton Tadoa, a member of the Tabernakel Pentecostal Church in Indonesia, was shot in the head and killed in the area of Poso while he road his motorbike to school where he served as a treasurer. His death raised fears of a new Islamic crackdown on evangelicals in Indonesia, where 10,000 Christians died between 1998 and 2003 at the hands of extreme Islamic jihad warriors, according to human rights group Open Doors. About 1,000 churches were burned down by Islamic mobs, Open Door said in that report.

Some ask why are we at war? Why are we fighting this war on terror? Because this is how some people in the world continue to settle their differences. Our Nation faces angrily squabbling, fighting mad, groups and individuals who are diametrically opposed to one another, but it seldom